

**CITY MANAGER'S  
QUARTERLY UPDATE  
JULY 12, 2004 – OCTOBER 15, 2004**

**Community Outreach by City Manager**

- Met with the leaders of the following neighborhood associations: Aspen Creek Tenant Association, Between the Creeks Association, B.F. Gilbert Neighborhood Association, North Takoma Citizens' Association, Ritchie Citizens' Association, South of Sligo Citizens' Association, SS Carroll Citizens' Association, and Westmoreland Area Community Organization
- Met with representatives of the following community organizations: CASA of Maryland, Historic Takoma, Folk Festival, JazzFest, Old Takoma Business Association, Sensible Growth, Sustainable Takoma, Takoma Foundation, Takoma Park Nuclear Free Committee, and Takoma Park Public Safety Citizens' Advisory Committee
- Met with the following institutional leaders: Pastor Laura Collins of First Presbyterian, Dr. Randal Wisbey of Columbia Union College, Clarice Somersall of Montgomery College, Ken Bauer of Washington Adventist Hospital, and Erwin Mack of Takoma/Langley Crossroads Development Authority
- Met with the following governmental leaders: Council Member George Leventhal, Council Member Tom Perez, Chief Administrative Officer Bruce Romer, Assistant Chief Administrative Officer Paul Folkers, Silver Spring/Takoma Park Team Leader Glenn Kreger, Housing and Community Affairs Director Elizabeth Davison
- Attended the following neighborhood association meetings: B.F. Gilbert Neighborhood Association, Old Town Residents' Association, Pinecrest Community Association, Ritchie Citizens' Association, Takoma Tower Resident Council, and Westmoreland Area Community Organization

**Public Works**

- The City completed its Crack Filling Program for 2004 at the end of September. Between May and September, more than 40 City streets that are less than 10 years old received crack filling treatments.
- The overall street renovation project started in March 2004. From July to October, the City has renovated the following streets: Maple Avenue (Hilltop to Sherman), Grant Avenue (Piney Branch to Holly), Kentland Avenue, Hilton Avenue, South Manor Circle, and Chestnut Avenue. The Ritchie Avenue driveway of the public works facility was also re-built. The City plans to complete the renovation of Cherry Avenue, Central Avenue, and Maple Avenue (Philadelphia to the DC Line) before the paving season ends in November. The \$700,000 in State grant monies has been expended, and we are currently using FY2005 CIP funds to continue the street renovation; approximately \$150,000 in CIP funds has been expended to date.
- The City conducted a significant storm water project that included the 6900 and 7000 blocks of Poplar Avenue in late September and early October 2004. The project called for the installation of under drain systems to correct hazardous situations in both blocks where significant amounts of storm water and ground water were flowing over the pedestrian sidewalks. During the winter months, this created very dangerous, icy conditions. The under drain systems are working, and the hazard has been removed. The cost for the project was about \$22,000.

## **Police**

- As of the end of the third quarter of 2004, auto theft figures were 11 percent lower than for the same period last year. The Community-Oriented Policing Program sponsored an October campaign to encourage theft deterrence, which included bringing in a prevention demonstrator to the City for four days. Additionally, the City has arranged for residents to purchase a steering wheel locking device for \$10 (about one-third of the retail value) through a bulk discount purchase.
- Traffic enforcement has been enhanced. Almost all officers are now trained in LIDAR enforcement, with specific areas identified for action. The speed advisory trailer is also in use. Citations on traffic stops were almost twice the number written in the third quarter of 2003. The department participated in a cooperative effort with five agencies to conduct a sobriety checkpoint on University Boulevard in September.
- Three pedestrian safety campaigns have been conducted this year in the New Hampshire Avenue and University Boulevard corridor. These campaigns have involved multiple jurisdictions and volunteers.
- In early October, Prince Georges County agreed to fund a Community Organizer for this area of the CSAFE initiative. The department expects to have an individual under contract in the near future. Chief Creamer is exploring the viability of replicating a similar program along the border with the District of Columbia.
- Recruitment efforts continue to fill staff vacancies. Five officers have been hired in 2004; all of these individuals were certified officers. Two recruits required compliance academy because they came from out of state. Additional certified officers are in the background investigation stage, and cadets who could be sent to academy training have been identified. The Criminal Investigations Division commander has developed an announcement and process to identify suitable officers to re-staff the VNI team once the department reaches full staffing.

## **Housing and Community Development**

- Nine grant applications were prepared and submitted under the following programs: Community Park and Playground Program (Toatley Fraser Park - \$45,000), The Innovations in American Government Award (COLTA - Recognition), Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service Labor Management Relations (Takoma Park Labor Management Committee - \$36,000), Maryland Community Legacy Program (Home Ownership Capacity Building - \$102,500), State Highway Recreation Trails Grant Application (Metropolitan Branch Trail - \$29,700), and Community Development Block Grant Program (Various projects - \$167,000).
- Montgomery County allocated \$80,000 in the FY05 capital budget for "permanent improvements" to the Metropolitan Branch Trail in Takoma Park. Staff is recommending that these funds be used to pave the temporary stone dust section of the trail and make other improvements. Staff is soliciting community input on how to complete the trail and will present the recommendation and input received at the October 25 Council meeting.
- Staff began work with Gallagher and Associates on the design of the signage system. The first Advisory Committee meeting was held on October 12. Staff is coordinating these efforts with major institutions -- Columbia Union College, Montgomery College, and Washington Adventist Hospital -- as well as SHA, DDOT, and other agencies.
- As part of the Capacity Building Initiative, staff continued work with the tenants at 22/24 Manor Circle (development of bylaws, selection of a construction inspector), 7423-27 Aspen Court (RFP for developer prepared and distributed), and 717 Sligo Creek Parkway (exploring possible consolidation of the project with 7423 Aspen Court). A meeting will be held with the tenants of 251 Manor Circle (seven units) on October 17 to determine their level of interest in purchasing the building.

## **Administration**

- Several key staff members underwent training on the communications equipment in the Montgomery County Emergency Operations center on September 14.
- The City participated in a Regional Command Post Exercise (CPX) at the Montgomery County Emergency Operations Center on September 27.
- The City forwarded the last required report to the Justice Department in August and ended the City's contract with the EEO Consultant in October.

## **Recreation**

- The Afternoon Addition, which is held daily at the Piney Branch Elementary School, has reached maximum enrollment of 65 for the first time. The plan is to move the program to the new community center space where more children can be accommodated. Fifty-five children are elementary school age, and ten are in the middle school age bracket. Program enhancements include hiring a local artist, swimming lessons at the Piney Branch pool, activity clubs, and homework help.
- This is the third year the Recreation Department has offered the after school program "KidzCity", which is held at the Takoma Park Recreation Center on New Hampshire Avenue. The first two years of the program were partially funded by grants for the Hot Spots and the Montgomery County Collaboration Council for Children, Youth and Families. This year, these grants were not available so the City is completely funding the program. There are 32 children registered, which is the maximum enrollment. The focus of this program is academic assistance. Children also participate in field trips and recreational activities in the gym.
- Three different camps were held this past summer: one at the Takoma Park Recreation Center for grades K-5, one at the Takoma Park Elementary School for grades K-5, and one trip camp for grades 6-8. Enrollment of elementary school age children was lower this year than in prior years. This was possibly due to economic factors, since other local camps reported a similar trend.

## **Communications**

- The newly designed website is being refined and tested in house. Plans are to launch the site with the new domain name, "takomaparkmd.gov" once the testing of the site is completed.
- Staff is researching software and equipment for web streaming and archiving, digital playback, and for productions in the new meeting room in the community center. City TV has close to 30 new programs in various states of editing from recent Folk and Street Festival performances.

## **Library**

- The Library now has four new public computer workstations and is offering hour-long sessions to patrons who wish to access the Internet or do word processing. We have recently installed a Useful Discover Station module, which is a turnkey public access computer system. This Linux - based system supports 14 languages, offers large print, and reads and writes all common file formats including Word. Applications include spreadsheets, a photo editor, CD-burning, Internet browsing, and a time-limit manager. This system is being considered for installation in the new Computer Learning Center.
- The College Bound Speakers series are being held the first three Tuesday evenings in October. This informational series, which is sponsored by the Library, provides information for high school students and their parents. Topics include choosing a college, the application process, funds for college, and the new SATs.